

**Statement of Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA)**  
**Labor- HHS-Education Appropriations**  
**Conference Report (H.R. 3010)**  
**Thursday, November 17, 2005**

I rise in opposition to the Conference Report.

This bill inadequately funds virtually every area of need. It slashes \$1.5 billion from our country's critical health, human services, education and labor programs.

While the Bush Administration has never fully funded the No Child Left Behind Act, this bill goes a step further by actually cutting total federal education funding for the first time in a decade—cutting No Child Left Behind so that it is now \$14 billion below the authorized level, slashing special education, safe and drug free schools, education technology grants and freezing the maximum Pell Grant award for the fourth year in a row despite rising tuition costs.

While people are trying to get re-trained because their jobs have been outsourced overseas, this bill cuts adult job training by \$31 million and youth job training by \$36 million.

At a time when we are trying to prepare our country for the aging of the baby boomers and threat of pandemic flu, this bill cuts funding for healthcare. It cuts the CDC's budget by \$249 million and provides the smallest percentage increase to NIH – less than 1 percent – since 1970. It doesn't provide any money for pandemic flu preparedness and eliminates 10 critical health care programs, including trauma care and the health community access program and cuts the health professions training grants by 69 percent making it even harder to recruit qualified health professionals.

The bill before us today would also freeze funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) at \$2.18 billion, counting both basic formula grants and emergency grants – the FY 2005 level.

LIHEAP serves about 5 million households, the majority of which have at least one member who is elderly, disabled, or a child under age five.

LIHEAP appropriations have failed to keep up with rapid increases in energy costs over the past several years.

The conference report is freezing LIHEAP even though consumers are expected to pay 52 percent more for natural gas, 30 percent more for home heating oil, and 11 percent more for electricity this winter.

Back in August, the Republican Majority heralded the passage of their massive energy bill, a bill that contained \$14 billion in tax breaks – most of them for wealthy oil, gas, coal and nuclear industries. At the time, they argued that their bill was “balanced” because, among other things, it provided \$5.1 billion in annual authorizations for the LIHEAP program.

But now, in this bill, we see that that Republicans are not willing to fully fund LIHEAP. Under this bill, the Republicans would freeze LIHEAP funding at last year’s level, despite the skyrocketing prices consumers will be paying for natural gas and home heating oil this winter.

Later today, the Republicans will be bringing up their Reconciliation bill, a bill that provides an additional \$1 billion for LIHEAP. But in the Energy and Commerce Committee, the Republicans voted against an amendment offered by the Gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Rush), the Gentleman from Texas

(Mr. Green) and myself to increase LIHEAP funding up to the full \$5.1 billion level. The Republican Leadership isn't even going to allow Democrats offer an amendment to increase LIHEAP funding up to that level.

The Republicans won't fully fund LIHEAP because they have other priorities. Their budget makes that quite clear. Tax cuts for millionaires, tax cuts for the giant oil companies, weakening environmental regulations for their business cronies. Those are the priorities for the Republican-controlled Congress. Funding for education, health care and low-income home energy assistance so that seniors on fixed incomes, and poor families can heat their homes this winter, are not their priorities.

I urge a NO vote on this bill.